212
756
759
538
533
535
754

[For the religious functions of the dabtara in the Ethiopian church, see category 793.]

754 158 of her blood, her health, life itself. The eyes of the victim are glazed, the nostrils distended, the face may wear a ghastly smile, and the body may be inflexible, or else in a nervous tremor. Relatives and "bread-companions" become terrified and run to the exorciser, often a dabtara, bringing him a gift called "ageba" (lit. entrance, i.e. visiting fee). By the time he arrives, the victim may be in contortions on the ground - being eaten by the buda. Some patients may try to hurt themselves, though others do not. When restrained, the patient may fight against the restraint, and women patients bite and scratch the restrainers.

Another classic case is total apathy, refusal to eat, and resistance even to the zar doctor, followed by sudden revival at night and the urge to run out and roam with the hyenas. Zar doctors explain this as a "zar being attached by a buda". An exorciser is then called in.

A common symptom of less violent character is nosebleed, which is very common. Persons vulnerable to this take care to [824] stuff smelly plants into the nose when on the trail. Such protective plants are collectively called "yabuda reyan" (smells against the buda).

[851] Boys, when hazing the children of an ironsmith or suspected sorcerer sometimes force garlic ("chequn") into the nose of the child with such force as to cause nosebleed, saying "now give up the blood you have stolen". Garlic is believed to have the power 754 824 to stop a buda and is therefore buried under the door of a suspected sorcerer, e.g. an itinerant smith travelling his circuit of customers; this is believed toprevent the buda from going out at night "to feed".

754 [647] Spitting or coughing blood (which may be tuberculosis?) is regarded as another sure symptom of buda, especially the demon "waggaa". The buda is believed to cause widespread epidemics, if he is powerful and many vulnerable victims are in the area.

776 754 Certain buda are believed to have very specialized "educated" tastes. One likes to rob the voice of debtara choristers who chants harmoniously in church (perhaps in revenge for the same debtara's part-time, extracurricular activity as exorciser), whereupon the voice will begin to croak and steadily grow worse, until the singer cannot even carry a tune. When a cow gradually [625] stops giving milk, despite a big udder, this is ascribed to the special taste of an "educated" buda.

e. Diagnosis, Treatment and Prognosis

755 [753] Sometimes the victim declares that he has had a dream in which a certain suspected person, e.g. an ironsmith, has been "eating" him. This can become very dangerous for the accused.

The question which diagnosis has to solve is not "what's eating you?", but "who is eating you?"; for the buda spirit and sorcerer are one person.

When the exorciser appears, the "buda" reacts violently. Even apathetic patients suddenly break out in violent peals of laughter, howl like a hyena, crawl about on all fours. The exorciser begins to question the "buda" to find out his personal identity. The "buda" replies through the mouth of the victim, in a hoarse voice, which is attested by all Amhara onlookers as "not the normal voice of the victim". The diagnostic procedure is a battle of wits between the exorciser and the "buda". The

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

755 certain Christian words which the buda fears. Some also slaughter a sheep or fowl, eat it roasted, then burn the bones so as not to attract the buda again.

Sometimes a reluctant buda is transferred bodily to a spot on a trail outside the hamlet. There a root of a bush is twisted - the signature of the buda and expression of his greedy intent. Whoever passes unprotected is pounced on by the hungry buda.

755 789 Written amulets (ketab") are hung on the neckcord or around the waist to assure successful prognosis. The writing and sale of these amulets is one of the most common extracurricular activities of the dabtara scribe and often his most lucrative income-producing work. Hence the dabtara is feared, for he can use his power for good or ill. The amulets contain such formulae as "besem Aw, Wold, M'ənfəs Qeddus" (In the name of the Father, Son, Holy Ghost); mystic names of archangels; formulae in Amharic, Geez, even Arabic of sorts. Church scholars with the title "mämher" (professor) are believed to be able to write even more powerful amulets, for it is believed that God gave 1000 special "medicines" to Jesus on Christmas (a sort of birthday gift) and that Jesus and the angels taught these "medicines" to the mämher. Another advantage of their amulets is that the mamher are never suspected of using their power for ill. In either case, the name of the person to be protected is written in the amulet; so that it cannot be transferred or sold without erasure and the new name.

159 754 As noted, women in the age group 15 to 30 are the most often struck. The following case was observed by the author in the town of Gondar. The patient was a 27 year old married woman, Zawditu Bogale (her first name meant "Queenie"). She was the mother of

159 •754 two children, both beyond the infant stage. She lived in one of the typical town structures of wooden posts, hard-mud walls, dirt floor, and corrugated iron roof.

During the night when she was first "struck", she screamed that she was being eaten by a buda. She howled like a hyena and wanted to run outside. Her husband and neighbors tied her up and feared that she was going to die. She threw herself on the ground and seemed in great inner pain. Her husband ran to the Addis Alem section, in the middle of the night, despite curfew and dangers, to fetch the woggesha doctor, to obtain strong smelling herbs. The woggesha came as soon as dawn arrived, for he had had some experience with buda cases. The woman patient spoke with a convincing male voice. Finally she revealed the name of the sorcerer who had placed the spell on her. She accused an Arab merchant, one of several who operated permanent stalls at the daily market. She exclaimed: "I am Abdulla Abdul Hijazi". She (correctly) identified his residence as the 3rd shop from the left corner". She boasted, still in male voice: "I am drinking her blood with my golden teeth".

As it turned out, there was indeed an Arab merchant by that name at that location, who had his two incisors capped with gold crowns, a rarity so far inland where no dentist offices existed, but common enough on the coast among Arabs of means.

The day before the attack, the woman had been shopping for sandals at this Arab's shop and several others, but had made no purchase since the prices were too high for her.

Once the patient had revealed the identity of the sorcerer, she was untied. Early in the morning the husband and his brother set out to look for the accused Arab, located his place, but could

159 not find him. They vowed to waylay him some night and beat him
754 bloody, but bystanders felt that they would cool their tempers and perhaps try to get the merchant into trouble with the local police by planting stolen goods on him - a common procedure, in the towns.

Later the same day, the Arab merchant was conducting business as usual. The rumor did not seem to have hurt him, but local grapevine had it that husbands would restrain their wives from shopping there, though they would risk sending servants. Abdulla had nothing devilish about him, except the distinguishing mark of the capped incisors. He was medium-sized, slender, calm, without any stare that might have frightened the woman. His goods were the usual town goods, ranging from imported eyeglasses to notebooks for school children, and cheap beads.

By this time the woman patient was seated on the dirt floor of her house, looking tired, worn out and dejected. She had no longer a headache, of which she had complained, but claimed to have "heartache" and swelling of the left breast. A neighboring woman was brewing coffee. Her husband's brother, who was also present,
[124] asked my advice. I gave him some aspirin for her. She forgot her apathy for a moment and gratefully and politely nodded. Later she refused to take that strange medicine of the foreigner.

d. Ethnic Caste under Suspicion of Sorcery

754 The Falasha ethno-religious group has been described
563 in connection with the division of labor, for they are the ironsmiths and potters in the Amhara regions, especially in the province of Begemdir (Gondar).

354 The Amhara belief in buda has been very troublesome for the
563 Falashas, for they are believed to have inherited the practice of sorcery from their fathers along with the craft of ironsmithing. Thus, the Falashas are blamed for individual cases of magical "eating" as well as for epidemics. Such accusations have repeatedly led to "sorcerer-killings". When an Amhara patient dreams that a certain Falasha is "eating" him, he sometimes gathers his kinfolk for a sudden attack on a Falasha hamlet, demanding that the particular "sorcerer" be handed over to them. In 1936, when the country was in turmoil following the Italian invasion, Falashas of one district were so plagued by buda persecutions that they evacuated their hamlets there and moved closer to the town of Gondar, though keeping a half day's distance from the town itself in line with their tradition of self-segregation(based on their religious particularism). Even now Falashas in their hamlets keep loaded rifles handy all night.

326 What happens when a non-Falasha learns the trade of ironsmithing,
563 e.g. a Curagē, which happens near Addis Ababa where no Falasha hamlets exist? He dies not become a "kayla" (ironsmith; this term is considered insulting); he is not regarded as a potential buda, because he has not inherited the trade. But, his handiwork is suspect as "unprofessional"! It is called "yärägä sera" (work of a "räga", unprofessional), which indicates that his customers are likely to hold a low opinion of the quality of his product and the endurance of his tools in those areas where Falasha-made articles are readily available. The latter is not true where no Falasha hamlets exist, so that Curage work is appreciated near Addis Ababa.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

563
754
797
326

What happens when a Falasha gives up his Judaic religion and converts to Christianity? Does that free him from being suspected of buda? Only to a slight degree, for his Amhara neighbors refuse to forget his ancestry. In case of conversion, the Falasha becomes an outcast from his own people and usually moves to town. Only an ex-slave or a very poor Coptic woman will marry him. In the latter case, his in-laws believe that his kinship ties are still stronger than his new religion. Thus, if they have him teach them his iron-smithing trade, they believe he will not teach it properly to his affinal relatives. He can never become deacon or priest.

The buda-ironsmithing syndrome of the kayla seems based, in the Amhara mind, on the idea that a very strong power, namely the evil eye spirit, is necessary to accomplish sound work in ironsmithing. To remain powerful, the buda-ironsmith is regarded by the Amhara as requiring blood from time to time, otherwise his product, the iron plowpoint, will not stand wear and tear and the spear will break.

What happens to a Falasha who gives up his kayla trade? The stigma will remain on him, where his family is known. Therefore, some Falashas have migrated and tried to change their trade. This avoidance has not helped at all as long as they remain Falasha in religion. Those who have taken the step of conversion (e.g. as result of Protestant missionary activity in the lat 19th century) are still whispered about as Falashas by their Amhara neighbors and their social and marital associations are largely limited to other ex-Falasha, ex-ironsmith people. Assimilation has not solved the problem of ridding themselves of buda suspicion by the Coptic Amhara, though it has reduced direct, individual accusations of sorcery.

578 In the new courts established by the central government in
689 the provincial towns, the term "kayla" is regarded as an insult and can be prosecuted legally. The proper, legal term is "seratanna" (lit. workman).

326 How can one explain this strong syndrome: ironsmith - buda -
754 Falasha, which still dominates the Amhara mind? It is interesting
563 that silversmiths are less feared than ironsmiths, are more respected and (perhaps in psychological consequence) are regarded as less hateful and vengeful; (they are also less feared for they work indoors, where they can "see" less). Furthermore, although Falashas in their own society are not ashamed of their ironsmith trade, the Amhara project their own despising of this manual craft onto the Falashas and believe that Falasha ironsmiths, ashamed to be seen working at such lowly work, "fasten" on passersby with their buda eyes.

Perhaps at the basis of this syndrome lies the idea that a skilled craft, existing within the technologically primitive Amhara society, must be the result of association with evil forces
[71] of the supernatural. This has been the pattern regarding ironsmiths in parts of the Middle East, Africa and ancient Europe. Among the Amhara Copts of Abyssinia, the idea that these ironsmiths are also "deniers of Jesus Christ", yet have an "education" of their own, above the "pagans" makes them doubly dangerous. Added to this is a projection of their own pattern of fears and hates.

e. "Buda" doctors past and present

756 While the aforementioned dabtara is the most commonly
793 called doctor of buda disease, sometimes, especially in urban areas, the Coptic priest himself is called in.

TK 177 It is therefore likely that the ganyēn idea was brought to the Abyssinian highlands from Southern Arabia about 500 B.C., superimposed on the earlier "buda" and "zar" beliefs, but reduced to the bottom scale of the spirit world with the coming of Coptic Christianity in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D.[122]

TK The ganyēn are considered by the Amhara wholly evil. In personality they are choleric, male quickly aroused to aggressive rage. They are believed to be of dark complexion. They are so tough "they can eat stones". They attack men far more often than women and in daylight rather than at night, (exact opposite of the zar). They cause neither hysteria nor apathy, rather they cause their victim to run amok.

682 754 As a result, the legal significance of the ganyēn possession in Amhara society is considerable. Almost every apprehended murderer claims that the ganyen "pushed his hand". He thus "was not himself". In the old tradition, if evidence for actual ganyen possession was deemed sufficient, the excuse brough sufficient mitigation so that the kin of the murdered individual could accept blood-money from the murderer and his kin without a blood-feud and without losing prestige. In such a case, the priest-confessor or "mänfäs gubaē", acting as intermediary, would go to the bereaved kin and beg forgiveness for the crime. If they agreed, the "danya" (judge) would set the "sämanya", (the amount of blood-money); formerly a minimum of 80 Maria-Theresa Thalers (now Eth$1000 = US $4000). It is noteworthy that this tradition is so strong that even the modern Ethiopian court in Addis Ababa often sets the damages for

122. See MacDonald, D.B.: "Djinn", (in) Encyclopedia of Islam, pp. 1045-1046, and Trimmingham: Islam in Ethiopia, p. 260.

[valuation given here is not in agreement with that given elsewhere - probably should read "US $460)." - Analyst]

manslaughter of an average citizen, killed e.g. in an automobile accident, or by a trigger-happy policeman, at "semanya" on its present monetary level.

Other types of ganyen disease are forms of epilepsy, "haut mal", referred to by the Amhara as "ganyen yazz" (lit. the ganyen has seized him; plural is "aganent". In this case, a dabtara is often called in and tries to exorcise the evil spirit with magic formulae; sometimes the woggesha doctor tries to intoxicate the patient with a paste of "assärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha), which drug finally lets him have some rest. In contrast, the method of the täñqway is literally a bag of tricks.

In his role as magician, the täñqway is called "qumña" (from "qäma", he stood up), for he tries to identify the personality of the evil spirit from his abode; e.g. in the water of a brook, or a waterhole in the river, or under a certain tree, etc. The magician is also considered an expert on fire and lightning. When a person is struck by lightning, "mäbräq" (lit. Thunder), the priests consider it heavenly punishment and in the past even refused to bury the victim in the churchyard; thus the täñqway is called in. His treatment consists of moving the victim quickly to the fireplace - for he regards fire and warm ashes as the counteracting principle. If a house is on fire in town, it is still believed that the magician, standing on the roof of a neighboring house with a mirror, can prevent the spreading of the fire by causing the flames to recoil.

Cases of drowning are his specialty also. This too is considered by the church a heavenly punishment for hidden crimes, for the victim is regarded as having been surrendered to the "demons";

776 Foreign observers, citing early European parallels, have often
174 wondered whether the Christian Church of Abyssinia has replaced the
797 pre-Christian spirits with angels and saints, denoting the pre-Christian spirits to demons. Except for the "ganyen"- where this attempt is still far from successful - only one foreign scholar has traced such a replacement, in Abyssinia. While studying the celebrations of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Abyssinia, he noticed certain features which led him to think that his holiday is used to obliterate an old "pagan" cult of outdoor spirits. [127]

Thus the predominant factor is still one of syncretism.

756 E. The Characteristic Significance of Amhara Healing of the Spirit.

The Abyssinian practitioner of magic is first and predominantly a healer (with the minor exception of the despised täqqway sorcerer). He is a healer of individual patients, rather than of society.

171 Thus the social significance is at most secondary. The only
[182] exception, the "zar society", is primarily "group therapy". There is only tangential contact with political, legal, administrative institutions and their function. This is very different from the "society of sorcerers" among the Bemba of Northeast Rhodesia, who hold the people in terror and exercise political power. [128]

[744 While the "zar societies" are female-dominated in quantity of
562] members and in leadership, males are by no means excluded. They therefore differ considerably from the "female witches society" among the Nupe of Northern Nigeria. [129]

171 The only close parallel between Amhara concepts of magic and
754 other African concepts of magic is between the "buda" complex of the

127. Tubiana, J: Un Culte des Génies Agreste en Ethiopia". Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, Vol. XIII, pp. 76-90. December 1954
128. Richards, A.I.: A Modern Movement of Witchfinders. Africa, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1935
129. Nadel, S.F.: Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft in Nupe Society. ibid

171 754 Ambara, and evil witchcraft feared by the geographically close Nilotic Azande. This is not surprising, since contact with the "Barya" people of the Nilotic Sudan is well known. In Azande society, persons who are "socially undesirable" are suspected of sorcery, but never the nobles and the rich.[130] Among the Ambara, too, [554] no "tellaq sew" (great man, noble, rich) is likely to be accused as a "buda" sorcerer, while socially low-class groups doing the despised work of ironsmithing are immediately suspected when a "buda" case arises. In both societies, Azande and Ambara, such suspicion leads to prompt interrogation of the suspect, and revenge by the kinfolk of the victim. In this type of magic, social significance, i.e. ethnic relations in Ambara territory, is considerable.

177 755 Ambara healing of the spirit is psychological, in the first place of significance. In the second place of significance is the enormous syncretism, among linguistic, ethnic, religious and racial components of the art of healing. It presents one of the few outlets for "free enterprise" available in the Ambara tradition. It is this cultural syncretism over the centuries, which, despite the political isolation of Abyssinia, has maintained and developed the spirited character of the Ambara peasant.

130. Evans-Pritchard, E.E.: Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande. London 1937.

136 The lowland is also the habitat of poisonous snakes, rare on the upland. They are usually lumped under the name "yäqolla ebäb" (lowland snake), and include the very poisonous cobra ("funjit"). This species is avoided, but the large, non-poisonous python ("zändo") is prized for its skin and is an export item sought out by some hunters.

136 364 A second category of fauna are the animals sometimes referred to by foreigners as the "sanitation squad". They protect the health of the population by cleaning up carcasses of donkeys left dead in their tracks; leftovers from butchering, etc. No one ever hunts these animals, though everyone is familiar with them, as they or their traces are common sights in urban as well as rural areas. It is only since the increase in motor traffic that hyenas no longer penetrate at night into the heart of Addis Ababa itself. These animals include:

136 [825] Hyena ("djebb"), spotted, often quite large, feeds mainly on carrion but on occasion attacks domestic animals, small children, and even shepherds sleeping in the open. In black magic, the hyena is "ridden" by the buda spirit, and many Amhara believe that they can distinguish the call of a real hyena from one into which a blacksmith has turned himself. This is why no one will open his hut at night to a strange. Hyena holes are also found in potter's fields, where the poor and strangers are buried outside churchyards, for hyenas smell out and eat recently buried corpses. Passers-by piously try to fill the holes with stones to prevent the hyenas from returning.

[754]

566 land fiefs in conquered territory, and he was, as special
46 [illegible] mitted to wear the long cotton shirt, "qamis"
[illegible] the common shamma (toga), and over the old style nar-
298 [illegible]ing knee-pants; cotton jodphurs and sandals remained the prerogative of feudal lords. Most of the skilled craftsmen never rose that high but spent their lives accompanying troops as tentmakers, carpenters, smiths, horn cup fashioners, tanners, or, at best, as silversmiths and embroiderers of harness and saddle coverings for feudal chiefs.

181 The material culture of the Amhara(still continuing
183 among the rural Amhara) is therefore a composite of the
566 equipment of the settled peasant and of the formerly itiner-
176 ant feudal lord and his troop of soldier-retainers and specialists (many of the latter from socially inferior ethnic groups). Moreover, the settled peasant feared not only
● 754 the actual "evil eye" of the rapacious warlord, but also the spiritually conceived"evil eye". Both factors undoubtedly contributed to the conservatism and the pattern of maximum utilization of natural products with a minimum of invention; leaving the exercise of ingenuity for other elaborations of culture.

[illegible] Standards

A. The Rural Settlement:

621 The typical residential unit is the hamlet ("tis", or, if several on one large hill, "mender"), rather than a village. The hamlet may consist of from two to a dozen huts, with the mode about five residential huts ("tuqul"). Thus the hamlet is often little more than an isolated or a semi-isolated farmstead, though another hamlet may occupy the other side of the same hill.

[352] accumulate there when poured over the limp sheets of bread.

261 (7) Food staples must be stored out of reach of domestic animals, on horizontal slats fastened between the horizontal beam and walls. On these slats lie flat cakes of "abshelo" (pre-fermented and baked hops), bunches of sorghum, husks of maize, etc.

352 To provide additional privacy, togas can be hung across. This was done in the past particularly at dinner [754] time, to protect the eaters from the "evil eye" in the [609] presence of non-kinsmen, and is still done in some remote areas, unless the peasant prefers to postpone his meal until the stranger has gone away, so as not to offend him.

342 The tuqul is regarded as a good, sound habitation by the Amhara. It is compared to the round tent of the king and duke ("ras") which not so long ago was the center of activities (if not the actual capital) of the province and [554] country. On the other hand, reactangular or square huts, "sʷaqʷela", are regarded as carrying low prestige, little more than temporary lean-to's of hunters. The proverb indicates [539] this low regard of a sʷaqʷela:

"Of children, the worst is the bastard;
of foods, the hardest is beans;
of clothing, the poorest is nʷtʷela (half-toga);
of housing, the poorest is sʷaqʷela."

Response: "(but) from enemy, the bastard son will defend you;
toward better days the bean will let you survive;
in (warm) daytime, the nʷtʷela will clothe you;
till a better is built, the sʷaqʷela will shelter you".

There are special tuquls of varying degrees of sturdiness:

243
[251] expose a full granary to the mercy of the feudal lord and passing soldiers.

Before threshing can begin, about a month after the end of the rainy season, a flat, circular area is marked out with rocks. Cowdung is stamped into the wetted floor, and the sun hardens the ground into cement-like consistency in one day. This threshing floor, called "awdema", is usually big enough to accommodate at least 4 oxen that are now driven over the grain, abreast but not tied, walking in a steady circle all day long, a procedure called "mabärayät". On the third day, winnowing (called "mäshin") takes place, by means of wooden pitchforks cut from a hardwood bush without carpentry (thus usually two-pronged), and a semi-circular winnowing fan about 2 feet long and not quite as wide, made of oxhide that has been stretched on a wooden, semi-circular frame. The threshed grain is covered overnight with branches, to protect it from wind.

On the fourth day, the grain is swept up with simple whiskbrooms made of stalks (e.g. those of wild oats). All these procedures are done as quickly as possible, partly to protect the crop during this stage of maximum vulnerability from birds and baboons, partly because of fear of the evil eye. If an unrelated stranger passes at this time, the farmer sprinkles him with water to avert the possible evil eye. Formerly spitting was the procedure.

[54 609]

In that season many small threshing grounds dot the landscape, especially on river flood plains. Here the plots are usually not more than 100-200 yards long. A minimum team of three men can usually do the job described in four days. Only one person is needed to drive the

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

462 563

B. THE ETHNIC DIVISION OF LABOR.

Division of labor according to the ethnic origin of of the worker is the most distinctly organized division among the Amhara. This is based on the attitude of the Amhara that labor (especially skilled labor and manual labor) is dishonorable. This attitude is reinforced by the close kinship ties which prevent a cultural deviant from shaming the members of his family by working in the district where they are known. It also reinforces the the ethnic boundary lines, and forces the non-Amhara, non-Coptic, working ethnic groups to live within the circle of their own kinfik, religious groups, and hamlets.

One of the most despised is the class of the Faqi, the tanners, who speak old-Cushitic languages such as Agau, are considered "pagans" in religion, and are associated by their trade with the hunters, the lowest class.

On a slightly higher level are the ironsmiths, usually of Falasha, who practice Mosaic Judaism, used to speak Quarinya, an old-Cushitic language, but use the same Semitic Geez language as the Copts in their religious worship and biblical liturgy.

563 463 754 326

This use of Geez by the Falasha is puzzling to the Coptic priests, and brings about a sort of grudging respect for the Falasha, which somewhat elevates their status above that of the tanners. But they are suspected of practicing black magic in connection with their smithing of iron. Patrons take magic precautions to counteract all sorts of magic bewitchment by the Falashas whenever they have contact with them.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

563
463 They are especially afraid of the "buda", evil eye concept,
754 of which Falashas are believed especially capable; also of
326 their supposed ability to turn themselves into real and magic hyenas at night.

This magic power, however, is believed to make their
[328] tools "strong", and the pottery of the Falasha womenfolk "hard to break", so that their wares are preferred by the Amhara, creating a monopoly for Falasha iron tools and pottery wherever Falasha hamlets are within a day's walking distance. In some areas there are itinerant Falasha smiths, whose womenfolk make pottery at the same time. They will live in a special guest hut at the edge of an Amhara hamlet.

463 Weaving is also done by Falashas, but they have no
563 monopoly on it, as Muslim Ethiopian weavers are believed
286 by the Amhara to turn out togas that are just as good. For many centuries Muslims were permitted to reside only in segregated sections of towns, such as "AddisAlem" of
[361] Gondar town. Though this prohibition has been lifted, most Ethiopian Muslims still reside in special quarters of towns, rarely in a rural hamlet on the Amhara plateau. They were not permitted to own land and no one would rent them any.

They see much more of the country trade routes, since it is they who do much of caravan trading, acting as guides, quartermasters and retail traders for Arab coreligionists who are the wholesalers, usually on routes leading to the Sudan, to Eritrea and to Somaliland. The Coptic Amhara consider the Ethiopian Muslims almost as foreign as the Arabs, even the descendants of Amhara who were forcefully

685 the "danya". Interestingly enough, if the thief did
696 not have money on hand to pay the fee of the lēbashay, it was the responsibility of the victim who had originally requested his services to pay him on the spot, and try to collect later from the thief. This had the effect of eliminating complaints of petty theft from setting this costly process in motion.

694 It seems that amateur thieves were often caught
789 by this process, and usually confessed, feeling helpless when confronted with such "powerful" means of detection. Professional thieves, particularly in the towns, who were known to have evaded detection, were and are believed to have obtained a powerful magic antidote from a dabtara scribe.

694 When all methods of detection have failed, the
787 distraught victim has a last resort. He may go to the nearest "tănkwa", a practicer of black magic, and ask him to divine by throwing his bones. This , too, is now prohibited, but still goes on, though not as openly as before. Failing even in this, the victim may go to the Coptic church and there, having purchased incense
● [754] and given a gift, pronounce a solemn curse, "sābātē masdăfat", on the thief.

171 The pattern of the lēbashay has been traced by
694 some observers to ancient Greek parallels, by others to the Arab bedouin "djirra" or "kassas" thiefseeker who also tracks murderers in tribal feuds. The tankwas seem of more typically African witchcraft pattern.

565 ("chäwa") of Amhara ancestry ("aṭṭenṭam"); and the "gabbar" sharecropper on feudal land, who is regarded as of doubtful ancestry (part-slave, or part-Galla ethnic), who is referred to as "rustic" ("balagär). While the former, usually descended from warriors who were given land many generations ago, considers himself inferior only to nobility and higher church officials, the latter occupies the broad bottom base of the Amhara social pyramid. The proverb says of the rustic "gabbar":

539 "He who honors a gabbar
will be despised by him ".

In fact there are not many who might honor a gabbar, except for some ethnic laborers and ex-slaves, both of whom occupy somewhat of an outcast position.

c) The Ethnic Classes

563 463 565 The ethnic skilled-labor class does not usually consider itself inferior to the gabbar class. This is especially true if the particular ethnic group has a non-material culture or subculture of its own, notably the Falashas who observe Mosaic Judaism.

The factor of fear of a skilled occupation, the practitioners of which are called "täbib" (lit. "knowing one ", i.e to whom secrets are revealed), enters into the class stratification. It attaches an aura of untouchability to certain occupational classes, especially if reinforced by ethnic or religious difference. 563 326 754 This combination of factors applies to the smithcraft, the "kayla", who are suspected of witchcraft; of being

563 326 754 able to turn themselves into "buda" hyenas, and of having learned their craft from the "buda" evil spirit. Since the smiths in the old-Amhara areas are mostly Falashas, whose formal religious worship is never observed by Coptic Amhara, the Falasha smith is feared and [412] suspected of black magic. At the same time, the iron tools produced by the Falasha are much prized, not only on account of their material utility but on account of their supposed supernatural strength, endurance and "secretly revealed" workmanship. Even today, the provincial peasant will insist on obtaining his plowpoint or adze from a "real" Falasha.

563 326 The Falashas practice endogamy, as do the Coptic Amhara. But in the towns where increased contact occasionally begins to attenuate the old rules, individuals of low prestige in both groups do sometimes marry, which [797] usually results in the conversion of the Falasha partner to the majority religion. Also due to modern contact, it is beginning to happen that a Falasha teaches his craft to a non-Falasha, but the peasants often reject the output of the latter on the grounds that it isn't a "really strong, genuine Falasha article".

563 281 Somewhat similar untouchability attaches to the tanners, who are usually of local pre-Amharic, (Cushitic, e.g. Agau) descent, often still speak their ancient tongues, and until recently were never converted to Coptic Christianity. As traditionally "conquered" peoples, they are not "attentam", and Amhara endogamous rules prevail against them. The stigma against them seems to

867
[539] "He, before becoming old,
wants to be serious".

(This is also said of a young man who saves gifts for a bride before he has chosen a girl).

When the adolescent boys take part in the aforementioned ritual mock-battles, younger boys imitate them by staging similar hazing-battles among their age peers.

Little girls are encultured in somewhat similar fashion by peers of their own sex, but more often including some older girls who patronize the younger. Girls are not taught any social graces among commoner Amharas, so that they sit shyly and wordless when in the company of men. Any girl who shows signs of daring is mocked and hazed as "gobba" (daring, enterprising female). Generally the activities of girls are less violent,. At times when boys fight their ritual mock-battles, girls dance rounds and sing in unison.

Both boys and girls are taught to be right-handed, and a "lefty" is extremely rare. They are taught to eat with the right
[264 576 514] hand, shake hands with the right, and use the left for wiping themselves with leaves after defecating. But the prohibition against use of the left hand on other occasions is not as severe as among Arabs.

[754] Both sexes fear the supernatural "buda" spirit, also in the shape of human sorcerer and magical hyena. Older boys claim they can distinguish the cry of a real hyena from that of a magical one, and sometimes scare younger children by imitating the howl.

867
302 Sex differentiation among children is expressed in the hair style. Boys wear a single coxcomb hairlock, girls a ring of hair around the shaven skull which sometimes may contain a center hair-

e) Visiting

574 Visiting kinfolk regularly, during the nine months of the dry
602 season, is a prime requirement. This includes, in this order of emphasis and frequency: patrilineal kin, matrilineal kin, affinal kin.

574 Visits to affinal kin are less frequent and more formal. When
606 visiting one's parents-in-law, usually twice during the dry season, the man is not supposed to come empty-handed, but should bring a sheep as a gift. He waits outside the in-law hamlet, just beyond the thornbush enclosure, and asks the children whether his father-in-law is at home. When the latter appears, the visitor enters and approaches the hut. He enters only upon invitation. There is no mother-in-law avoidance as such, but contact is reduced to a minimum, between son-in-law and mother-in-law, to achieve maximum privacy for both.

602 Flouting kinship obligation is regarded as a shameful deviation, indicating an evil character. Kinship relations represent much security for the individual, but also involve him in serious obligations, such as aiding kinsmen in blood-feuds and reprisal-raids ("bäqqäl"). A person who wanders away from the kin hamlet, or from kin obligations, when his mood or irresponsibility carry him, is called "läqq" (after the soft reed that grows rapidly at the least rain, but drops when grown to maturity).

574 Visitors, particularly strangers, must observe certain taboos,
● 754 lest they be suspected of bringing the evil eye. They should not ask the number of children, nor praise their health or good looks aloud. This is considered dangerous, because the "buda" spirit is always on the lookout for fat, juicy children so that he can magically "drink
764 their blood" and make them waste away. (Children are vulnerable to many communicable diseases).

574 When visiting the sick, the visitor, especially female visitors,
576 are expected to express their sympathy in unmistakeable tones. The

524 girls, or two girls holding each other by the hand and spinning like a top. Sometimes somewhat older girls meet boys with whom they have established an experimental "joking relationship" ("täwaza"), and play house, building little huts out in the fields during the dry season, within the hamlet in the rainy season. This free experimentation comes to an end just before adolescence, when their relationships become more formal and more supervised.

Imitations of parental activities fill much of children's playtime. Little boys play "farmer", weave rainhoods of reeds and "broadcast" seeds (actually pebbles). Little boys begin to practice the "art of insult" (brain, not only brawn) e.g. such ethnocentric insults as the following:

[186
578] Question: "where are you from?"

Reply:		Response:
"Begemdir",		"Land of shysters and quibblers."
"Shoa",		"Land of liars and traitors."
"Gojjam",		"Land of sorcerers (buda)."
"Gondar",		"Gossipers and blabbermouths."
"Gurage",		"Land of tricksters."
"Tigre",		"Land of hotheads."

524 754 The culture's fear of black magic, especially "buda", is reflected in children's games, such as:

A: "Buda, buda, what do you eat?"

B: "Meat" (or, imitating the sorcerer's hidden language, "cakes").

A: "What do you drink?"

B: "Blood" (or, paraphrased, "pure water"). Whereupon boy B howls like a hyena (the "horse" of buda), sprints toward boy A, who flees.

524 831 When no adults are present, boys play games imitating the sex life of animals, sometimes highly imaginary, e.g. the "coitus of baboons" ("yätota beddosh");

Seated and facing each other, two boys lift each other with their feet,

828 imbecility - "leb defen" (lit. whose heart is stopped up).

828 201 Certain emotions are expressed by certain patterned physiological signals, often unconsciously:

Anger may be expressed unconsciously by biting the lower lip, or one's finger. Also by knitting the brow ("fir kosättälä"), from the painful expression that results from drinking the purgative drug kosso, so that a person who perpetually goes about with a frown is said to have a face "as if he had eaten kosso", a "kosso face" ("kosso fit"). Melancholy is expressed in a wrinkled facial expression ("fit chändadda").

The symbolic significance of the eye has been referred to in a number of connections. Timidity, and respect in the young, is expressed by "turning the eyes to the dust" ("ayn afar"). Impatience, by shifting the glance rapidly ("ärämmätä"), without making impatient body movements which would be "lower class". Directional signals may be consciously given ("ayn ätaqqäsä") by eye movements already described; and observation out of the corner of one's eye ("ayn täräämmätä") is a finely developed Amhara subtlety. The sorcerer's eye ("yäsaw ayn" lit. "the man's eye," to avoid the sinister name of the "buda" evil spirit) is greatly feared; particularly when it stares and seems to pop ("ayn täroläggälä").

[754]

The "left" position is considered the embarassing side ("gera ärabba") (perhaps because the right side is always the honorable, o because it would be embarrassing to place someone so that he would have to take food with the left hand which is used in the toilet). Left-handedness is extremely rare. When some undertaking turns out badly, the saying is "The matter has turned left" ("nägär gera hona").

827 Physiological functions carried out without repression are considered low-class and low-ethnic by the Amhara. Only a low-class

754 776 [784] The actual name, "buda", is considered taboo, for it is dangerous and might attract him, when uttered aloud. Since this spirit is always male, his name is paraphrased as "the man's eye" ("yäsäw ayn"), "shadow eye" (ayna tela); and a victim is paraphrased "the man's victim" ("yäsäw gällabi"). Even the term "smith" is used, sometimes indirectly, for further security. Thus, to accuse someone of sorcery, a security-minded Amhara says pointedly, in his presence: "As for me, I am not the son of a smith".

754 609 The first attitude toward strangers is therefore one of caution, lest he be a carrier of "buda". The suspicion is confirmed if the stranger has intelligent eyes, darting eyes, shining eyes, or if he stares curiously without saying much. It is confirmed if he seems skilled manually, for then he may be a "tabib" (lit. trained person, technologically wise), hiding the fact that he was born into the ironsmith caste. It is less disturbing if he openly reveals himself as an ironsmith, for then he lives segregated in a hamlet of his own ethnic group, and when contact must be established for trade (purchase of iron tools and pottery), certain "precautions" against being struck by the evil eye can be taken; extra-vulnerable persons such as pregnant women can be kept from contact; and all transactions will be carried on in full daylight.

754 776 [609] The "buda" is regarded as preferring to strike and feast on women, especially beautiful ones, and to feed, cannibal-style, on fat, beautiful children. The stranger therefore should never praise the health or beauty of children, or of women, out loud. Mothers hide their children at the approach of a stranger. Nice new garments on a child also attract the buda, and this is one reason why children under 5, when infant mortality is highest, are given only rags to wear, and are permitted to be dirty most of the time. [894] [164]

754 and are permitted to be dirty most of the time. As for males, the
776 buda also likes to feast on healthy-looking, fat, handsome warriors
[753] and chiefs. "Buda" is the general diagnosis when a person always known as healthy suddenly sickens and dies. Therefore it is feared even by the bravest warriors.

754 Even at present, when "modernization" is proceeding from the
776 central government, "buda" belief has not shrunk. It has simply
178 expanded to take in modern attractions. Thus, police officers in the provincial towns are believed to have attracted "buda", who has developed a taste for officers in nice, new uniforms; and is believed to be "greedy" for healthy-looking boys doing modern gymnastics in their new elementary schools, eager to consume their physical prowess and grace. Even rich, strong, fat, gay, well dressed Europeans are regarded as vulnerable, but less so because "they do not fear him". Fear attracts him too.

"Buda" is most active in August, at the height of the rainy season.
[821] His favorite time to strike is just after a heavy thunderstorm, when tornado-like gusts of wind seem to pull up the hut and try to pull the roof off. This would enable "buda" to "see" his victims better, and cannibalize them.

751 Many ways of trying to prevent victimization by "buda", or at
754 least of reducing one's vulnerability, have been devised over the
776 centuries. To reduce vulnerability, one should not appear too happy, too gay. One should not become an object of open admiration, or of envy and jealousy. One should further paraphrase the tabooed word "buda", by saying "watch your eyes". Newlyweds, who are very vulnerable, should cover their glowing faces for ten days, to keep

751 their happiness from showing. Eating and drinking in the open makes one
● 754 extremely vulnerable, because this arouses buda's greed, and at the
776 same time makes it easier to penetrate the victim's body, through the wide open mouth and unguarded nose. Therefore, old-time Amhara cover their faces when eating in front of strangers.

751 This attempt to reduce vulnerability is closely related to some
754 of the "language of the shamma" (toga). In the presence of strangers,
291 this can be draped in the fashion that indicates "reserve" - covering the mouth, or even nose and mouth, with the front section of the toga, which has been draped in a turtleneck. When travelling in strange districts, which are doubly dangerous because of cast-out buda spirits hidden by exorcisers along trails, a strong-smelling
[824] herb pushed in the nostril, is often used as a prophylactic. The most commonly used of these herbs is "tena adam" (lit. health of Adam, i.e. mankind). The mouth should be kept closed, or covered. In a fearful situation, he may say "shadow, may it not fall on me". Touching iron, considered specially "strong", also helps. Children are warned to stay away from strangers, and never to leave a baby unattended, lest "buda will eat you". The term "eat" is regularly used for buda possession (not for zar possession), for it indicates consumption.

751 Typhus ("talalafi basheta") and severe epilepsy ("yabuda basheta")
754 the latter literally ascribed to buda (lit. buda disease) are the most
174 common ailments promptly diagnosed as "buda" "eating". Evidently
[64] Amhara doctors long ago observed that covering the mouth and nose and staying away from possibly infected strangers reduced the exposure to certain contagious diseases; they then proceeded to envelop this observation in the culture pattern, including the draping of the toga and stopping up the nose, and not eating uncovered in the presence of strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.

strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology. Certain districts are regarded as "breeding places" of the buda; the entire province of Gojjam is so regarded by Amhara of Gondar and other areas. The "buda" spirits are believed to have their headquarters in Gojjam, their schools where they study techniques of finding and trapping victims, and new methods to resist interrogation by the exorcists who try to induce the "buda" to reveal his name, i.e. that of the human sorcerer through whose body the "buda" makes contact and "eats" (sometimes through initiative of the buda, sometimes called through the ill-will of the sorcerer for a certain human victim). The people of Gojjam (even the Amhara there!) are considered "educated" buda, more sophisticated and less crude, but more dangerous because more clever (note: equivalent to "Jerusalem-educated" zar!). The Gojjam "buda" can "eat" even at long idstance, and are *not* hampered by the dimension of time. Thus, a visitor from Gojjam who has been offended (e.g. by not having been offerred a seat or a drink or by having been refused hospitality) on his return home, months later, may "eat" the offender at long distance. Even years and oceans can be crossed by a sufficiently "educated" buda; even the foreigner, years later and across the sea, may be affected, according to Amhara belief.

In the Galla provinces, the "buda" are believed by the Amhara to be crude and uneducated. The Amhara does not fear the Galla on this score, as much as he would fear a strange Amhara from Gojjam or a Falasha ironsmith. But the "buda" of Galla areas are believed to turn themselves into hyenas at night and to eat corpses of humans more often; and if they capture a live Amhara stranger, force him to remain as a servant, drugged (like a zombie)/

T76 T54 The same "methods" are ascribed to Falasha ironsmiths who live in their own hamlets in the Amhara regions. The Falasha, who are regarded as having some secret "education" of their own (actually Mosaic Judaism), are believed to be able to turn a victim into a donkey and make him do a donkey's work, then turn him back to a human in their own hamlet, and make him do a servant's work. In case rescue nears, the Falashas are believed to be able to turn him into one of the many large pots that always lie about a Falasha hamlet where the women make pottery for sale.

Thus the buda complex contains many facets: medical-regional-ecological (Gojjam's Blue Nile is a major caravan route that can bring infectious diseases) - ethnic - religious - Middle Eastern evil eye complex - African fear of the ironsmith. All this is fitted into the Amhara cosmology of the supernatural.

Though closely interconnected in the Amhara mind, some of these facets will be considered in separate detail.

T54 158 b. Symptoms of "buda" disease.

The classic symptoms of "buda" disease follow the following sequence. The victim, usually a young woman between the age of 15 and 30, complains of utter fatigue and a heavy head. An hour or so later, she breaks out in hysterical frenzy, wild laughter, stares with wild, empty eyes, moves about restlessly as if driven by some inner demon. An hour or so later, she complains of intestinal cramps, and cringes under the violence of the pain. Her fingers are clenched so that the thumbs are not visible - (regarded as sure sign of the "buda"). For, it is believed, her thumbs have been grasped by the buda that is eating her and he won't let anyone else see them lest his "food" be taken from him. This is called "tänabbäzä", stolen by force, for the buda is robbing the victim

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[6]

Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *tayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[7]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful physical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argument also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fasting prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ţegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are expressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Traditional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ţayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well-known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*753 Here, again, the consequent ailments are caused by contact-irritation. Although urine-mists can cause pubic sores, more frequently gerifta-mists are inhaled, to affect the body internally. In this role, the mist may irritate the walls of the respiratory tract, causing sneezing and coughing, and penatrate to the heart, where it induces severe local pain, rapid pulsation and its attendant effects.

*753 *278 762 Some humans also possess illness-causing abilities. Laymen often know recipes for poisons which can be added to a victim's food and drink. Although the inventory of such recipes is great, the poisons' effects tend to be uniform, differing mainly in the rapidity with which death is brought about: Once ingested, the toxin agonizes and destroys the digestive wosfat; simultaneously, it wahses up to chafe the heart into intensive overactivity. Symptomatically, the victim experiences nausea, vomiting, lassitude, and---owing to the heart's cognitive function---severe disoreintation. When a poison fails to produce a rapid and painful death, the victim's demise is preceeded by several weeks of indiscriminate and aggressive anti-social behavior as a consequence of the heart's deterioration.

*753 • 754 Amhara sorcerors can cause a great variety of ailments, as well as other misfortunes not directly affecting the victim's physical well-being. Knowledge of

*755 *713 ensorcelling spells and rituals is mainly limited to certain debteras, the Coptic scholars among whom the *755 639 [212] ganel's human intimates are also found. Since laymen are generally illiterate and unfamiliar with the liturgical language (Ge'ez) in which spells are composed, they are unable to master the long lists of magical names and injunctions which are associated with powerful spells. Consequently, although laymen occasionally own ensorcelling spells and rituals, these spells are generally abbreviated and invariably weak. In addition, lay-owned spells and rituals are usually obtained from questionable sources, since the layman is unlikely to possess a medium appropriate for "purchasing" such knowledge.

*753 • 754 Human illness-causing powers may be inherited or congenital, as well as learned. In Begemder Province, inherited powers are limited to budas, Falasha wer-hyenas. The buda's dangerous abilities reach full potency after pubescence, when the hyenas' nocturnal cries compel him to spend the night with them feasting upon disinterred human cadavers. At dawn, the buda returns home, assuming a benign demeanor until his morbid attentions are [826] + [192] fixed upon a living victim. Many of these are persons of "good blood" (tiruw dem sew), individuals who have inherited the light and unblemished complexion favored by Amhara, although other attractive physical features

also excite the buda's interests. The buda's remaining victims are people he sees eating ordrinking in public, particularly while the buda himself is hungry or thirsty. In all cases, the buda concentrates upon the part of his victim's anatomy that initially attracted him, and through it introjects his invisible buda aspect into the victim's abdomen. Unknown by the victim, the buda sets about dining on the latter's viscera; only later that day do the initial symptoms---nausea, vomiting, torpor---become evident. By nightfall, the unique symptoms of buda possession begin. The victim no longer complains of nausea, and vomiting ceases; now oblivious of his surroundings, he alternates periods of vacant staring with violent frenzies, during which he attempts to tear off his clothes and seeks reunion with the roaming hyenas. If forcibly restrained, he grits his teeth edge-to-edge, rigidly holds his flexed limbs close to his body, and compresses fingers against palms, thumbs inward; to onlookers, he appears as a human hyena. At dawn, the victim's frenzy dissipates, and he lies abed, greatly fatigued by the nocturnal exertions and severly weakened by the buda's feasting. At nightfall, the frenetic drama is repeated, and, unless the buda is exorcised soon, the victim's death becomes certain.

*[192] Yisew ayn ("the person's eye") shares important similarities with buda powers. It is exercised involun-

*753
• 754 tarily, and, in the case of yisew ayn, this power is usually unknown to its possessor. The victim of yisew ayn may have "good blood" or, more frequently, he may have been observed while eating or drinking (milk being the most commonly mentioned beverage). Like the buda, the bearer of yisew ayn stares intensely at his victim, who subsequently develops symptoms of chronic fatigue, abdominal cramps, headache, and occasional vomiting. These similarities are attended by important contrasts: Yisew ayn is congenitally acquired, and is not limited to any segment of the population. Its victims are sometimes people whose finery, rather than physical attractiveness, has drawn the yisew ayn's interest. Although its pathogenic mode is only vaguely understood, there is
[26] no agent introjection. Lastly, it is considerably less serious than buda possession; there are no nocturnal seizures alternating with diurnal lassitude, and child victims often experience an eccentric syndrome---eating ashes, clay, and charcoal---for which there is no buda possession analogy.

*753
*[192] Certain ailments result from contagion (telalafiy), that is, the transmission of a disease substance (basiyta) from a sickman to another human recipient, without need for a mediating agent. Telalafiy is linked to dermatological symptoms (septacemia, hemorrhagic ulcer, scrofula, carbuncles, venereal chancre, shenkroid, gonorrhea,

278
759 cological specifics are kept secret, herbalists are not always adverse to commenting in public on the type of specialized equipment or esoteric knowledge that they possess (that, for example, he obtains medicinal roots with a digging stick of a "certain" exotic wood). By these means, the categories of pharmacological elaboration enter into common knowledge, while the specifics are retained by their owners.

757 There is a third and final category of associations,
801 numerological ones. Certain numbers (particularly three and seven) appear in therapies with greater frequency than do others. But this again represents only a statistical abstraction, largely unappreciated by the herbalist because of his familiarity with a very limited number of therapies. Here as in the other categories of pharmacological associations, the symbolism expressed by specific links is obscure and, so, unavailable to the herbalist for generating new associations. Thus, the combination of riverine stones, the number three, pitted mortars, and specific medicaments within a single therapy can only be "conventionally" explained by the herbalist.

759 The herbalist who would "elaborate" his therapy is
754 confronted by more than technical obstacles, however. A secular healer who betrays a speculative interest in the regularities of Amhara pharmacology can only excite his fellows to compare him with the debtera, and inevitably

*759 *754 to circulate accusations of occultism (asmateña), of daemonic aspirations, and eventually of sorcery.

*298 *757 A relationship between a therapy's pharmacological complexity and its therapeutic success is not always necessary. That is to say, therapies effective against serious ailments are generally assumed to be pharmacologically elaborate. However, some simple therapies, ones which cite only medicaments and the bare physical operations necessary for processing and applying them, are likewise entirely adequate for bringing about a remission in disease symptoms, although such therapies are limited *[192] to non-serious ailments. For example, a widely-known therapy for dwarf tapeworm infestation (kowsol) prescribes that the herbalist obtain a quantity of enkowkow seeds, a medicament readily and inexpensively purchaseable from a medhaniyt korag (professional medicament gatherer) of the market place. These seeds the herbalist grinds, mixes with water, and gives to the sickman. Once the medicine's purgative effect has ended, the infusion is drunk again, for a total of four applications. Although pharmacologically simple, it is considered a certain cure for kowsol.

*298 *757 *759 In the end, the Amhara herbalist finds it inconvenient to consider any of his therapies as an amalgan of discrete manipulable elements. Instead, he considers pharmacological details to be diffusely integrated

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEBTERA LIFE HISTORY

*756
*793 To his public, the debtera is most remarkable for his embodiment of so many significant contradictions. As an ecclesiastic, he is indispensible to the Church; he ensures its permanence by training boys for the priesthood, he enriches it with the fruits of his scholarly labors, and he sustains it by leading the performance of the Mass. Yet, he is often regarded by the laity as a breaker of priestly vows, an adulterer, and an intimate of the ganels against which the Church's existence stands opposed. He is a healer of the sick; he divines the future and provides an impressive variety of pro-
* [754] phylaxes for clients. He is also the most notorious sorcerer in the land, and appears oblivious to the certain fate which satanic friendship and ensorcelling entail for him.

To explain these contradictions is to discover the sources of the debtera's reputation as the most powerful of Amhara healers, a reputation which he enjoys in spite of the fact that his therapies are pharmacologically little different from those practiced by secular herbalists. Because this observation depends upon familiarity with the debtera's professional life history, it is denied to the debtera's public, who only dimly perceive,

application. In a medical context, he is adept in all but the chirurgeon's domain, and his works are perceived as strong. In addition to therapy, he is an expert diagnostician, and giver of prophylaxis. Finally, the debtera's medical powers are perceived as only an aspect of the more general powers he possesses, and which he displays in various non-medical works affecting property, interpersonal relations, and, importantly, the sending of illness.

Reconstructing the Debtera's Biography. Laymen find confirmation of the putatively necessary ties which bind debtera to ganel in the relatively high proportion of physically aberrant debteras. Laymen explain these disabilities as evidence of the mischief played by the capricious ganels on their debtera partners. While debteras constitute only a minute portion of the highland population, they are a highly visible one. Debteras, particularly abinet-practicing ones, tend to live in towns. There, they advertize their presence for the multitudes, during the performance of the Mass, in the churchyard conversing among colleagues, or as a center from which their students circulate on their daily begging. For the layman, the appearance of achondroplastic, pituitary, and tubercular dwarfs, of cripples with shrivelled limbs---all professional confreres and all living within the radius of two or three miles---bears impressive wit-

debtera and ganel are real enough, they do not conform with the layman's notions of intimacy and friendship. Rather, they are either 1) specific and impersonal, in the case of offensive works (kifat), or 2) episodic and manipulative, in the case of ganel pulling (sabiy).

The following paragraphs of this section describe these abinet activities which involve the complicity of ganels and consider them in terms of instrumental value and moral significance to the debtera.

Kifat Works. Kifat (literally "evil") works are abinet which send illness, death, and other misfortunes onto selected victims. Illnesses caused by kifat works are inevitably serious, and coincide symptomatically with ailments that have non-kifat work etiologies. They fall into three categories. The first includes ailments which are characterized by combinations of severe and prolonged stomach pain, nausea and vomiting, headache, diarrhea, fever, and kijet (nightmares); these ailments are difficult for the layman to diagnose correctly; they are resistant to secular therapy, and are all considered potentially mortal. Kifat works of the second category produce ibidet (madness), and are expressed symptomatically as compulsions to either wander about aimlessly, or to sit incoherently in a single place. Ibidet is also caused by mers (poison potions), for which kifat work

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*753
• 754 owning debteras (as well as occasional laymen) possess recipes. The third variety of pathogenic kifat works
[842] sends sexual maladies. Sterility, considered a very
[839] serious ailment, is sent to women only. Impotency affects both sexes; it is experienced by women as uncontrollable crying when approached or touched by any man, and is often confused with aynitila.

754 The most commonly owned non-pathogenic kifat works belong to a category known as "amderab". These works enable the operator to send onto his victim's house and fields misfortunes of fire, water (as destructive hail and rain storms), earth (as rains of stones and clods), air (as destructive winds), and putrification (as noxious odors). Other non-pathogenic kifat works have a domestic aspect (e.g., prepared foods are continually spoiled, food stores are consumed at an unnatural rate, servants grow discontent with the master's household, and domestic animals wander away); a mercantile aspect (e.g., trading rivals find it difficult to sell their goods, rival talla sellers find their newly prepared beer turning to a pitch-like consistency); or bring misfortunes at the hands of other human agents (e.g., the victim's son is made a wastrel, kenezereña, the victim repeatedly and unintentionally incurs the enmity of people, the victim exposes himself to ambush by enemies).

At its simplest, a kifat work requires a recitation,

• 754 concomitant with the manipulation of prescribed materials. The recitation consists mainly of strings of ganel asmat names, repeated a prescribed number of times, in conjunction with the victim's name.[33] Significantly, the recitation includes no information about the operator (or his client), and is devoid of the supplication and contriteness which characterizes the digams of inoffensive abinet. The materials and accompanying activities of the kifat work replicate the familiar dichotomy between "contagious" magic (e.g., pathogenic kifat works often call for a sample of the victim's hair, clothing, or feces) and "sympathetic" magic (e.g., "Cut him as I cut this stalk," "Twist his guts as I twist this root).[34] Pathogenic kifat works are sent in either of two ways. In the first, a malady is sent from a distance, and the kifat work operation ends with the recitation and manipulation of the materials at the debtera's rooms. Such

[33] Frequently, this is a multiple of the numbers associated with the asmat names of inoffensive abinet (e.g., seven times seven repititions).

[34] Often, the symbolism of kifat works are more obvious to the operator, than is the case with inoffensive abinet.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

754 kifat works require special conditions of the operator, generally that he remain chaste for a designated period prior to the operation, and often require that the kifat work is performed in a room where no sexual relations have taken place. In the second type of pathogenic kifat works, recitation and manipulation are followed by burying the materials (denkero) close by the victim's place of sleeping and eating, generally beneath the threshhold of his hut. Non-pathogenic kifat works are sent from a distance only.

*787 754 539 Competence in the use of awdunigist texts is considered a prerequisite for the effective use of kifat works, and laymen are well aware of the anti-therapeutic uses of these texts. If attack by a kifat work is to succeed, information must be obtained beforehand regarding the special vulnerabilities of the intended victim. For this information, the debtera turns to awdunigist, reading it just as he would for a client, noting periods of danger, ailments, misfortunes, and pharmacological information. This information is used to select an appropriate type of unhappiness; in addition, it indicates effective materials for the operation of the kifat works, particularly regarding characteristics of animals to be sacrificed or whose organs are to be used.

*956 *793 764 Acquiring and Using Kifat Works. The considerations which influence a debtera to acquire inoffensive abinet

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

studies are likewise persuasive regarding the collection of kifat works: The debtera is threatened by serious dangers, and he lacks an effective, less controversial alternative. Thus, his early acquisitions of kifat works are intended to be an implicit threat against those student rivals (towdaderiy), who would assault and ruin him by magical and mundane means. A man generally begins his repertoire of kifat works before leaving the kiyne school. Once begun, there are strong inducements to expand it, since a repertoire of kifat works can be effective, particularly against students knowledgeable in abinet, only if it includes works sufficiently varied to threaten the intended victim's prophylactic defenses. Subsequently, an extensive repertoire of kifat works remains a valuable asset for a debtera who is developing a commercially remunerative abinet practice. The threat of sanctions by kifat works is his ultimate guarantee for the honesty of other debteras during abinet exchanges. Similarly, the threat of kifat works guarantees payment [426] by laymen for the debtera's services. Often, these services extend beyond the performance of abinet and include the lending of money at interest.[35] Finally, kifat works

[35] Capitalizing on his cash reserves, awakiy debteras sometimes lend money, customarily at an interest rate of 30% for three months.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*756 *793 • 954 are considered attractive increments to a man's abinet repertoire, for subsequent exchanges with debteras, and as remunerative services for clients (although by no means all owners of kifat works offer them as a commercial service).

A user of kifat works identifies the potentially immoral aspects of such works as the invocation of ganels and sending of misfortunes. However, he perceives his own use of kifat works as morally neutral and pragmatically justified, analogous to more prosaic techniques, such as the use of firearms: The invocation of ganels is perfunctory, and implicates neither debtera nor client in any personal way. The debtera conceives kifat goals as either defensive or retributive, in either case legitimate. Where kifat works are offered as a commercial service, the debtera's perspective is confirmed in two ways. First, the client seeking his kifat services inevitably provides a self-seeking reconstruction of the difficulties that obliged him to seek this assistance. Further, debtera and client explicitly consider the degree of injury which would be commensurate with the offense of the chosen victim; whether it should be a mortal ailment, a painful lingering sickness, or a property loss; whether it should be visited on the principal offender, his

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

child, or his livestock.[36] (In reality, the client's selection is more likely to be determined by considerations of cost than of casuistry.) The debtera may further dissociate himself from the morality of a particular episode, by giving the client the sorcery bundle, with directions for its use. The debtera owning kifat considers the transmission of kifat knowledge during abinet exchange to be more fraught with moral danger than his use of it. To preclude this obstacle to the easy exchange of abinet, the recipient customarily foreswears the use of the kifat work unless he is pressed by persecutors and without alternatives.

Pulling Ganels. Ganels are organized into a simple hierarchy composed of individually named commanders (azmac) and anonymous subordinates (tazaj). Supreme among ganels is the fallen angel Satanael. His several hundred lieutenants are divided into ganels responsible for sending specific ailments or misfortunes, and local commanders who repose in the lakes, rivers, and mountain tops of Ethiopia. The multitude of subordinate ganels are the immediate bearers of sickness and misfortune; their

[36] The debtera is not expected to provide any detailed information, such as the identity of the specific ailment of misfortune he intends to send.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

work is done at the direction of the commanders, or is struck adventitiously as the opportunity arises.

A debtera calls ganels to obtain either information or the promise of services. Only ganel commanders are summoned. In contrast to their ganel subordinates, they are more difficult to call, and more cunning. However, they alone possess the therapeutically useful information which the debtera desires, whether for a specific disease episode at hand, or a disease category associated with ganel causal agents. The information which the debtera obtains supplements abinet that he already owns, and does not constitute complete therapies. The debtera also calls ganels to direct them to command subordinates to perform pathogenic works against persons he wishes to strike down, or to desist from afflicting the debtera's client.

Ganel-calling abinet works consist of three sets of activities. First a specific, named commander is "pulled" from his repose into the debtera's presence (thus, the title "ganel sabiy", "demon puller", by which such debteras are popularly known).[37] It is easiest to call a

[37] This title is interchangeable with "ganel aciwac" ("converser with the ganel"), and "ganel gelac" ("revealer of the ganel").

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*756 222

*793 from one another along two dimensions (disease name specialty and healing power), debteras are distinguished along only one, differential power. This tends to have a conservative effect upon the layman's valuation of the medical abilities of awakiy debteras, relative to those *764 of secular healers. That is to say, in any disease epi- *793 sode, the prophylactic or therapeutic failure of one *754 awakiy debtera is perceived as evidence of the success of the kifat work of another awakiy debtera; the balance between the two is a matter of quantitative differences of power. This contrasts with the situation of secular herbalists, whose therapeutic failures eventually persuade the sickman to consult a class of practitioners whose healing powers are considered more effective than are theirs (vide the "herbalist chains" discussed in chapter three). On the other hand, therapeutic failure by an awakiy debtera generally leads to a search for a debtera more powerful than the kifat sender. Both laymen and debteras recognize that some ailments caused by kifat works can be lifted only by the sender of the kifat who must retrace the steps of his kifat performance.[44]

[44] For example, severe stomach pain is produced, inter alia, by inserting a copper wire into a cactus lobe; the pain persists until either the victim has perished or the wire has been removed.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

APPENDIX B

HERBALIST THERAPY FOR YIBUDA BAŽIYTA (BUDA POSSESSION)

• 754 [825] The buda is a human, male or female, who shares a kinship of sorts with the hyena. When at night he hears their calls, he is irresistably attracted to run about with them. Like the hyena, he strongly desires to eat of human flesh and blood, but his cravings are not malevolent, and he often regrets this compulsion. The buda trait is most often passed down within families; in Begemder Province, it is limited to Falasha families.[52] [856] The buda trait is present at birth, but like an individual's other capacities, reaches full potency at its bearer's physical maturity.

In his nocturnal guise, the buda bears his human [302] face upon a hyena's body. The first time an individual runs with the hyenas, he (or she) is obliged to cut his hair short, in the fashion of Falasha women; the subsequent transition from wer-hyena form to human appearance is accomplished on the following morning with the aid of a secret medicine. The buda is, however, most dangerous, when in his prosaic human form, he produces the buda syn-

[52] Elsewhere in Ethiopia, buda accusations are directed against local endogamous iron working peoples.

754 drome in a victim.

[826] *[192] The buda is attracted to 1) persons of "good blood" (tiruw dem sew: someone with a light, clear and unblemished complexion, or, by extension, with another particularly attractive, konjow, aspect of his body) and [264] 2) persons observed eating or drinking, particularly when the buda is hungry or thirsty. While concentrating on that aspect of the victim which attracted him (e.g., the face of the child of good blood, or the diner's mouth), the buda introjects his invisible self into the victim's body. Once inside, he sets to eating the viscera, simultaneously laying eggs from which prodigious numbers of wosfat hatch out. About two-thirds of his victims are children of ten years or less.

*753 754 His victim is never aware of the disease act taking place, and symptoms of the ailment appear only later in the day, as the wosfat hatched by the buda vent their rapacity on the sickman's stomach and heart. Thus, he experiences nausea, vomiting and fatigue. At nightfall the first of the ailment's dramatic symptoms appear, as the buda acknowledges his presence.[53] Complaints of nausea and stomach pain stop, as the sickman grows oblivious to

[53] Bibuda tabolac, "seized by the buda", is also a common nomer for this ailment.

*753 his surroundings, stares vacantly before him. It is now
*754 that the buda cries out, through the sickman's lips, in a hyena call, and passivity gives way to vigorous attempts by the sickman to tear off his clothes and join the roaming hyenas once more. Now the sickman must be restrained forcibly, tied down if no longer a child. While restrained, he characteristically grits his teeth edge to edge, and presses fingers against palms, thumbs drawn inward, in facimile of a hyena; occasionally blood flows from his nose. Next morning, the sickman becomes more lucid but is greatly fatigued from the nightime exertions.

*298 The yibuda basiyta medhaniyt awakiy begins his
*765 therapy with an herbal inhalent against the introjected buda. The herbals are either ground and placed in a sachet, crushed in the therapist's fingers and stuffed into the sickman's nostrils, or made into an infusion in which a cloth is wetted and inserted into the nostrils. The inhalent torments the buda like fire; his struggles to escape it are reflected in the sickman's writhing and blathering. The buda is wily and tries to hide in an unaffected part of the sickman's body. The therapist holds the buda fast, by seizing the sickman's stiffened thumbs to which the buda customarily secures himself in order to better eat at the victim's viscera. Simultaneously, the therapist presses a piece of unfired iron